THE

A S S,

OR,

he SERPENT, &c.

By Thos. Bradbury.

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ASS,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

GEN. xlix. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

Issachar is a strong Ass couching down between two Burdens;
And he saw that Rest was good, and the Land that it was pleasant; and bowed his Shoulder to bear, and became a Servant unto Tribute.
Dan shall judge his People as one of the Tribes of Israel.
Dan shall be a Serpent by the Way, an Adder in the Path; that biteth the Horse-heels, so that his Rider shall fall backward.
I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.

THESE Words are Part of the Prophecy that *Jacob* dealt among his Sons when *the Days drew near that he must die*; and they let us see with what Variety of Temper those People acted, who all grew from the same Father: A full Argument how well the Distinction is form'd, That *all are not Israel, who are of Israel*: Neither *because they are the Seed of Abraham, are they all Children*: He here opens out *what shall befal them in the latter Days*, and how they would carry it when they came into the promis'd Land; and, because some of 'em should have little or no Taste of Liberty, and others would pursue it through all the Expence and Danger that lay in their way, he places these Two together, that every one who reads may do Justice upon the plain Opposition there is between 'em.

I shall consider the Words, First, As they describe a People that are Sluggish and Cowardly, who will venture nothing to save All, whose

whose Souls are beneath knowing the Distinction of Bondage and Freedom: And on the other hand, as they give us the Character of those who admire their Liberties, and will dare to seek and fetch 'em where-ever they are carried; who reckon this a Property that should not be lost as long as it can be kept, and will scarce submit to an Existence under Tyranny.

IN these two Branches you have the Division of the Text; Here's a Tribe of *Israel* that gives us an Example of each Temper: *Issachar* is remembred for his neglect of that which *Dan* was resolv'd upon no Terms to part with: And by observing what good old *Jacob* saith of these Two that were so unlike one another, we may fix the Characters that are due to those who either despise or value the Deliverance of this Day.

I. I shall begin with the Account that you have of *Issachar*, whose Passive Obedience (if you'll call it so) is condemn'd to Memory by these Words; *Issachar is a strong Ass couching down between two Burdens: And he saw that Rest was good, and the Land that it was pleasant, and bowed his Shoulder to bear, and became a Servant to Tribute*: Where you have three Things.

1. The general Temper of this People.
2. The Subjection and Bondage they fell into. And,
3. The Reason they gave for this Stupidity.

(1.) YOU may observe, that many of the Tribes have their History couch'd in a Resemblance that's given of 'em: They are compar'd to some Creature of that very Disposition that should obtain among 'em: Thus *Judah is a Lyons Whelp*; *Naphtali a Hind let loose*; *Joseph a fruitful Bough*; *and Benjamin a ravening Wolf*. Now these Allusions would convey to us such thoughts of the People as bear up to the Account we have of 'em afterwards: They are most of 'em to be understood as a Reputation; but what is said of *Issachar*, is as full of Contempt as a Metaphor can be: We are to know him by his Likeness to the most

Ver. 9, 21. 22, 27.

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most heavy and stupid Animal in the Creation. Instead of having his Name from something vigorous and beautiful, his Father leaves this upon him, That he's *a strong Ass couching down between two Burdens.* The Ground of the Similitude you see is the little Relish they should have for their Liberties, the sorry and dull Surrender they would make of themselves to Tyranny; which is a Temper expos'd in this Comparison two ways:

1. It's imputed to nothing else but the Stupidity of them that submit to it; the Tribe that sinks into those Measures is resembled by an *Ass.*

2. It's condemn'd by the Insinuation that it was in their Power to have it otherways; *Issachar is a strong Ass:* That very Strength that makes him couch under a Load, would be sufficient to throw it off.

1. WHAT the Comparison leads me first to tell you, is, that the Foundation of all Passive Obedience is laid in Stupidity. They that *couch down between two Burdens, who bow their Shoulders to bear, and become Servants to Tribute,* may here see what Herd they belong to.

Tho' an Ass was more us'd in those Eastern Countries than it is with us, yet the Old Testament hath accounted of it as so mean a Creature, that the Comparison is very just: It seems to be made for no higher a Design than Drudgery, bearing of Burdens, no way remarkable either for its Head or its Heels, so little capable of being taught, that the Folly of our Nature is signified by it, that Man is *born as a wild Ass's Colt:* And tho' it's true in those Parts, we find the greatest Men riding on them, yet it's a Creature that the Ceremonial Law hath branded in a very peculiar way: It must, upon no Terms whatsoever, be thrown among the Offerings of the Lord: The Command was very general, *Thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that opens the Matrix, and every First-ling that comes of the Beast which thou hast, the Males shall be the Lord's.* This Law was laid out in that compass to put 'em often in mind of the *Messiah,* who should be *the First-born of every Creature;* yet to this Exod. xiii, 12, 13.

there's one Exception, and the only Animal left out is, *every Firſtling of an Aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a Lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, thou ſhalt break its Neck.*

So that when *Jacob* ſpeaks of *Iſſachar* under This Compariſon, 'tis a viler Name than he could poſſibly leave him by Another; and it may intimate to us, not only the Stupidity of their Nature that run into this Crime, but a particular Unfitneſs for the Service of God. They ſeem to be the Outcaſt of both Worlds; they give up all that's dear to 'em in this, and ſhew a Dulneſs that can have no room in the other. The way of ſerving God is *without Fear, being delivered from the Wrath of Enemies, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all our days.* *The fearful and unbelieving* are in the front of thoſe Sinners who fill *the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone.* You may always obſerve it, that an indifference to Civil Liberties goes along with a neglect of that which is Religious: A Man that throws away the Bleſſings of Providence, cannot have a due reliſh to thoſe of Grace.

Luk. i. 74, 75.
Rev. xxi. 8.

Tho' ſubmitting to the impious Will of a Monarch hath been exalted as if it was *the one thing needful*, yet it's eaſy to prove, both by the Rule of Scripture, and the Hiſtorys of Men, this is ſo far from containing the Whole of Religion, that it really poſſeſſeth no one Part of it: There can be no *Faith* in it, for that would both *purifie the Heart* and *conquer the World.* It was this that made Moſes *forſake Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King.* And there can be no *Love*, I mean to God or his People, for that would teach us to value what the One gives and the Other enjoys: And tho' this may be call'd *Patience*, yet it's a proſtitution of the Name to a Temper which hath none of the Thing; for this Grace ſhews it ſelf in Bearing a Burden, not in Laying it on. The over-ruling Hand of God we muſt ſubmit to, but this will conſiſt with all the Zeal we can uſe againſt the Tools he employs. The Diſtinction is a good one, and as old as *David*, who knew how different his Behaviour ought to be: *If the Lord hath ſtirred thee up againſt me*, ſaith he to *Saul*, *let him accept*

Heb. xi. 27.

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an Offering, I have deſerved it from him, and cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand; *but if they be the Children of Men, curſed be they before the Lord.* 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

'Tis plain that People loſe their Chriſtianity with their Liberties; and when once an encroaching Power hath made 'em Slaves, there needs little more to make 'em Heathens. The Miniſters that preach up This Doctrine, will ſoon underſtand no other: It ſhall drive Faith, Repentance and Holineſs out of the Pulpit, and inſtead of feeding the Children *with Bread*, they'll give 'em *a Stone*: In a little while we ſhall hear of nothing elſe, but Obedience to the Luſt of Men, as if Chriſt had no other Errand in laying down His Life, than to make the Kings of the Earth a compliment of Ours; that as he was *a Servant of Rulers*, we muſt be ſo too; as if no Sin could be dangerous but what they call Rebellion, and the Terms of *procuring to our ſelves Damnation* were never to be uſed but in one caſe, which is reſiſting of a Civil Power. We ſhall ſeldom hear a better Application of that awful Argument; 'tis not ſo warmly pleaded to make us *flee from the Wrath to come*, that *being warned of God concerning things not ſeen as yet, we may be moved with Fear*: They'll but ſeldom trouble their Heads about the Danger of Debauchery, that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*: They'll tell us but little of the Hazard ſuch are in, who are *lovers of Pleaſure more than lovers of God*, who blaſpheme the whole Scheme of Religion, and uſe that Book to make them laugh, which makes *the Devils tremble*; who ruſh into the Retirements of our Worſhip, the Ordinances that ought to be kept clean and holy; I ſay, we hear little of their Danger, tho the Scripture hath given us the ſame dreadful Word in that caſe which agrees ſo well with them in the other: *They that eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink to themſelves Damnation.* 1 Cor. xi. 29 Theſe are the Encroachments that Slavery will make upon our Religion.

But we *have not ſo learned Chriſt*. The Apoſtles that went about with the Goſpel, were often claiming the Privileges of the Law. For this did *Paul* argue

gue with the *Centurion* on the Stairs of the Caſtle, and would not let the Chriſtian run away with the Roman: For this did he threaten to ſhake the Government of *Philippi*, and refuſe to take his Liberty at that eaſy rate, of going out of the Priſon; No, he was reſolved to let thoſe Magiſtrates know, that as the Laws of the Empire had given him a Protection, ſo he would never loſe it for want of Zeal; and tho the Jaylor, who was but converted the Night before, brought him the Meſſage, *they have ſent to let you go, now then depart in peace*; yet he uſeth the Advantage that Innocence gave him over Tyranny, *they have beaten us openly, and uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt us into Priſon, and now do they thruſt us out privily, nay verily but let 'em come themſelves and fetch us out.* So tender was he of his Privileges, that tho' he knew as much as any Man how to deſpiſe the Pomp of the World, yet in this caſe he'll inſiſt upon a Ceremony that perhaps was never demanded before; that the Magiſtrates of the Town ſhould come to the Priſon-door and beg Pardon, and bring them Out whom through a Miſtake they had put In, and deſire them to *depart from their City*. For this did he refuſe to anſwer the Summons of *Feſtus*, who would have betray'd him to his Enemies, but *appeal'd to Cæſar*; and from this Principle did he deal ſo roundly with *Ananias, God ſhall ſmite thee thou whited Wall, for ſitteſt thou there to judge me according to the Law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the Law?*

Act. xvi. 36, 37.

Ch. xxiii. 3.

This is the Spirit of our Religion, it allows none of the Stupidity that *Iſſachar* was run down into; for an *Aſs* can no more be a *Patern* under the Gospel, than it could be a *Sacrifice* under the Law. But it's enough we are told what ſort of Creatures they are, by the Metaphor in my Text; deſpicable Men, and rejected by God; made for Service and Contempt. The Compariſon gives us the loweſt Opinion of thoſe to whom it belongs. They are by this repreſented as a ſtupid ſervile People, for the Word fits their Heads as well as their Shoulders.

2. The

2. THE Crime of their *becoming Servants to Tribute*, is hinted at by the further Account we have of 'em, that they lay under no neceſſity of doing it: They had it in their Power to be otherwiſe, and might have compell'd a better Lot for themſelves and their Poſterity. Had they been drain'd, and weaken'd, and ſunk down to an Inability, that which was now both their Sin and Puniſhment, had been only the latter. But *Iſſachar* was *a ſtrong Aſs*, able to Refuſe a Load as well as to Bear it.

Several Annotators give us this Note from the *Hebrew* Word, that he was *an Aſs of Bone*; which perhaps is a further Contempt of him, to tell us his want of Spirit, as if he was only Outſide, a meer Shell and Frame of Nature: And indeed they who ſo tamely give up all that can be dear, ſhow but little Soul in that Surrender. But I ſhall take the Words in the firſt Senſe I gave you of 'em, that he is call'd *a ſtrong Aſs*; to ſignifie, that he had Capacity to have done otherways, only he wanted Heart and Courage to uſe it. He that *couch'd down between Two Burdens*, might eaſily have proteſted againſt One; he that *bowed his Shoulder to bear*, could have cloath'd it with Armour: And the Wealth with which he paid his *Tribute* as a *Servant*, might have led him into the Field as a Rival.

All the Inſtances that we have in Scripture of Submiſſion to an unrighteous Power, repreſent the People as not able to do otherways. We never once find a good Man neglecting to reſiſt an Injuſtice when he could it. *Moſes* indeed fled from *Pharaoh* becauſe he had no proſpect of conquering him; but when he had to do only with a ſingle *Egyptian*, who was *ſmiting one of his Brethren*, he's no longer about it than whilſt *he looks this way and that way*, and then *he kills him, and hideth him in the Sand*: And this is ſo far from having the Cenſure, that a Slave would give it, that upon That Action he was in hopes to have raiſed his Publick Character, and by this Juſtice upon the Officer, thought to have led on that of the People upon the King, as the Martyr *Stephen* tells us; for he brings in this as the Reaſon why *ſeeing one of the* Exod. ii. 11, 12.

Act. vii. 24, 25. *the Jews suffer wrong, he avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian,* because *he supposed his Brethren would have understood, how that by his hand God would have delivered them, but they understood not.* If their Zeal would have come on as fast as his would have led it, they might have been saved then; but they lost 40 Years by their unbelief. *David* run away from *Saul*, when he had no Friend to stand by him, but he put himself at the Head of a little Army as soon as he could; and the only Reason why he did not give him Battle was, because he had not Force enough: But when those great Numbers *came to him every day*, he makes no scruple to go out into the Field, for there fell some of *Manasseh* to *David* 1 Chron. xii. 19. *when he came with the Philistines against Saul to Battle.*

A just and holy God may indeed deliver us over to the Will of evil Men; but to say, that he would have us deliver up our selves, is to blaspheme his Empire; for *he hath no Fellowship with the Thrones of Iniquity, who frame Mischief by a Law.* That which held Zion in Captivity, was God's making *her Strength to fail; He had delivered her into their* Psal. xciv. 20. Lam. i. 14. *Hands against whom she was not able to rise up:* But when she had more Strength, there's a new Exhortation to use it; *Shake thy self from the Dust, O Jerusalem; loose thy self from the Bands of thy Neck, O thou captive Daughter of Zion.* Isa. lii. 1.

In these two things you have the woful Temper of this People; They were stupid, and not to be impress't by a generous Argument; and tho' it's true, they had Strength and Capacity, yet it was all thrown away upon a lazy Nature, that would not use it. *Issachar is a strong Ass couching down between two Burdens.*

(2.) WE have the folly of their Behaviour, and are told, how soon they part with their Liberties. And here you meet with Bondage in every Form and Shape. Here's Oppression in all its Weight, *he falls between two Burdens.* Here's a Slavery to his Person, *his Shoulder is brought to bear* what they lay upon him

him. Here's Poverty in his Concerns, *he becomes a Servant to Tribute*; and here's a Neceſſity for him to be Active in all this. Oppreſſion ſtupifies the Faculties, *he couches down beneath his Burdens*, he *bows his Shoulder*, he conſents to be a *Servant*: What a *Gulph of Perdition* was this People ſunk into? Whither will Tyranny lead thoſe who have the Heart to follow it? Can we ever begin to ſtop too ſoon, when it will be ſo dreadful to have it too late?

1. YOU obſerve here what weight this Oppreſſion was laid on with: 'Twas not what *Reboboam* threatned, *the Heavineſs of a little Finger*; but *he couches down between two Burdens.*

Some tranſlate this between two Hills; and underſtand it of the Situation that *Iſſachar* had in the Land of *Canaan*: Others ſuppoſe that it refers to the Quarrels they might have with thoſe Two Tribes that lay on each Side of 'em; but the Words ſeem to tell us what a Load of Miſery they had brought themſelves under.

TYRANTS, who know no Juſtice, will allow no Mercy; they never think their Grandeur advanc'd high enough; they'll ſet no bounds to the Luſt of Empire, but let it rove in all the Licenſe of their own Fancy. Do not imagine that there's any dealing with an Arbitrary Government. Laws are only Shackles upon you, but no Rule to 'em. *Some remove Land-Marks, they violently take away Flocks and Feed thereon, they turn the Needy out of the way, the Poor of the Earth hide themſelves together: Behold as the wild Aſſes of the Deſert they go forth to Work, riſing betimes for a Prey*, and it's the tame Aſſes of the Villages that fall into their Hands: They cauſe *the Naked to go without clothing, he hath no covering in the Cold; they pluck the Fatherleſs from the Breaſt, and take a Pledge of the Poor; they take away the Sheaf from the Hungry: Men groan out of the City, and the Soul of the Wounded cries out.* Job xxiv. 2, 3, &c.

If you would not *couch down between Two Burdens*, you must enter an effectual Protest against One: For they that submit, will, in a little Time, be brought to that pass; *Her Carriages were heavy loaden, they are a Burden to the weary Beast, they stoop, they bow down together, they could not deliver their Burden, but themselves are gone into Captivity.* Thus did the *Ammonites* with the Men of *Jabesh Gilead*; tho' the poor People would have submitted themselves unto 'em, yet they will allow of no easier Terms than *thrusting out the right Eye, and laying it as a Reproach upon all Israel.* So unlimited did *Benhadad* take himself, in the Court of a Man, who had gone too far, in saying, *My Lord, O King, I am thine, and all that I have:* He does not only claim *his Silver and Gold*, but *his Wives and Children*; and would *send his Servants the next Day to take out what was pleasant in their Eyes.*

Isa. xlvi. 1, 2.

1 Sam. xi. 2.

This made *David* rather chuse to *fall into the Hands of God, than into those of Man:* Not but that the former could have destroy'd him with more Expedition than the latter; but *with the Lord there was Mercy*, with Men there is none. And indeed the Process hath been very short; When once a Tyrant hath said your Laws were his, He hath soon come to affirm your Lives were so too. And therefore it's the same thing being his Vassals, and being his Cattle. All that you have *pertaining to Life and Godliness*, is thrown in as a Morsel to *Cæsar*: *They take up all of them with the Angle, they catch them with their Net, and gather them in their Drag, therefore they rejoice and are glad; They will empty continually, and not spare to slay the Nations.* And how unhappy must the Case of a People be who never know when they have done Suffering? Such a Government upon Earth resembles one of the worst Ideas that we have of Hell; where there is *no Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful*

Hab. i. ult.

fearful looking for of more Judgment and new *Indignation.*

2. THEIR Perſons were made vile and contemptible, *they bow their Shoulders to bear.* There are ſome Uſages which God always reckon'd an Indignity to Human Nature. 'Tis for this reaſon that he limited the Number of Stripes that were to be given to a Malefactor, *leſt thy Brother ſeem vile to thee:* And the Statute of Murder is laid out upon this ground, That *in the Image of God made he Man.* Such an Oppreſſion did the *Jews* live under in *Egypt*; their Burdens were very grievous in the *Brickkilns*, the Task-maſters oblig'd them to their whole Quantity of Work tho' they denied them *Straw*, and then puniſht 'em for not doing what they knew to be impoſſible.

When this comes to be the Lot of ſuch as give up their Liberties, the Juſtice of God calls for our Adoration; they that have *lived in Pleaſure* and Vanity, are moſt likely to make a Sale of all that they have; they have *eaten the Bread of Idleneſs*, and, How righteous is it with Heaven to give 'em that of Sorrow? That they who are *brought up in Scarlet, ſhould embrace Dunghills?* This is one Conſequence of Slavery; and it fell heavily upon the Prieſts at *Jeruſalem*, who might remember their Sin in their Puniſhment: They that us'd to lead the Blind, came to *wander as blind Men in the Streets*, and *ſo polluted with Blood, that Men could not touch their Garments: The Anger of the Lord divided 'em, and he would no more regard 'em.* An Abſolute Government Swallows as faſt as you can Give, and, What will this come to in time? *But the hanging up of Princes by the Hand, not honouring the Faces of the Elders, taking the young Men to Grind, and making the Children fall under the Wood.* Lam. iv. 14. Chap. v. 12, 13.

3. It runs out into Poverty. This *paying of Tribute*, must be understood of excessive Taxes; Impositions that are enough to drain a Country: Not what a People consent to for their own Defence, but what are extorted from them. And then what signifies the Goodness of the Land, when the Profits are offer'd up as a Sacrifice to the Luxury of a Stranger? Thus hath *a fruitful Land been brought into Barrenness. The Houses* of the People were *made a Dunghill*; and they that have liv'd in the midst of Plenty, *sought their Bread to relieve their Souls.* They consent to the lowest Terms meerly to enjoy what Nature had made their own: *We have given the Hand to the Assyrian to be satisfied* Lam. v. 6. *with Bread*; and, *better are they that perish by the Sword, than such as are stricken through for want of the Fruits of the Field*: It was a dreadful Article in their Judgment, *thine Enemy shall distress* Deut. xxviii. *thee in all thy Gates.*

4. That which makes the case deporable to the last degree, is, that the People themselves concur in it, either through a Necessity, or the Habit of Bondage. *They bow their* own *Shoulder to bear*; and, by an unaccountable mixture of Choice and Force, *become Servants to Tribute.* When a Nation hath given up their Liberties, they do not only lose the Thing, but all the Taste they us'd to have of it.

And this may be consider'd both as a growing Vice, and a Stupidity that the righteous God hath sealed 'em up under. The Misery of such a Case hath this in it, that the People are never likely to *remember from whence they are fallen or do their first Works*; *they sleep a perpetual sleep, and do not awake.* 'Tis not a Damage that sets them a Thinking, or warms a powerful Zeal to recover what they have lost; but by a long Course of Subjection it becomes their own Act.

(3.) I'll enquire into the Reasons they give for this neglect of 'emselves, or what it is they get in exchange for their Liberties; and you find there are two things that leave 'em under the power of this Infatuation.

1. What they reckon the Favour of the Enemy, *They saw that Rest was good.*

2. The natural Advantages of their Country, *The Land it was pleasant.*

1. *They see that Rest is good*; which shews us how their Judgment is perverted, to suppose that there can be any such thing as *Rest*, while the Yoke of Tyranny hangs upon their Shoulders. Now, this Opinion hath its only Root in Cowardise and Lazineſs. They dread the noble Toil of War, tho' the Hazards People run that way, are far from being equal to those of a slavish Temper, you can scarce lose so much by venturing, as you give away by submitting. Whilst the *Jews* resisted *Sennacherib*, they had what we call a Chance for it; but he tells them roundly, If they *made an Agreement with him by Presents*, it must end in his *taking 'em away from their own Land. And is this the Rest wherewith they would cause the weary to lie down?* Is this all that a People get by throwing themselves upon the Mercy of a Tyrant? We may well say, *Arise and depart, this is not your Rest, because it's polluted.* Mic. ii. 10.

2. The Benefits of their Country was another thing that soften'd 'em into this Compliance, *They saw that the Land was pleasant.* They'd no mind to be carried off, because here was enough for their own Necessity, and for the Humour of him to whom they paid Tribute. But what a poor Argument is this? If the Place was so *good*, it deserved to be fought for; If the Produce of Nature there was so great, 'tis pity that they should have All of the Profit who had None of the Pains. Thus they pleaded upon their Return out of Captivity, *the Land that thou hast given to our Fathers,*

Neh. ix. 36, 37. *to eat the Fruit thereof, and the Good thereof, behold we are Servants in it; and it yields much Increase to the Kings whom thou hast set over us because of our Sins; also they have dominion over our Bodies, and over our Cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great Distress.*

Thus have I laid out to you the former of these Characters, and shown you how poor a Figure *Issachar* made in the World. But,

II. We have an Account of better things in the Blessing that he pronounceth upon another Tribe. *Dan shall judge his People like one of the Tribes of Israel; Dan shall be a Serpent by the Way, and an Adder in the Path, that bites his Horse's Heels, so that his Rider falls backward; I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.*

What is said of this brave People, is so plain a Reverse to the Meanness of the other, that a very little Enlargement will serve here.

1. He begins with a new sort of Language to give us the Description of these. What they did would be worthy the Name they derived from their Father; *Dan shall judge his People like one of the Tribes of Israel.*

2. We have the Measures that he will take in order to it; and that is, the Use both of his Policy and Courage: He is like *a Serpent by the Way, and an Adder in the Path*, and, rather than not be trampled on, *he'll bite the Horses Heels*; he'll undermine the Foundations of Tyranny, *so that the Rider will fall backwards.*

3. These noble Designs are what *Jacob* recommends to the Blessing of God, in that Prophetick Rapture, *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord!*

(1.) We have a general Honour put upon them. *Dan shall judge his People like one of the Tribes of Israel.* What judging of his People means I had

had occasion to show you the last Year; That it includes an Execution of their Laws, and a Defending of their Liberties from any that would oppress them. And this we find that *Sampson* did, who was *of That Tribe*, and paid less regard to an Enemy, in whose Country he lived, than any of the Judges. Now, do but consider how this is plac'd in a full Opposition to what was said of *Issachar*; and from thence you may collect, That those Rulers do not *judge their People*, who perswade 'em to *bow down under Two Burdens*: These are inconsistent with one another.

But what I would observe to you, is, the honourable Turn he gives this, That it's doing *like One of the Tribes of Israel*: As if they that Neglect it were sunk below the Name. But *Dan* kept up the Dignity of his Family, and show'd that his Descent from so many Patriarchs was not in vain. Those antient Worthies, whom God had call'd out from the rest of the World, led him the way to it. One of the most remarkable Things that *Abraham* did in a publick Manner, was the taking of *Five Kings Captive*; tho' the People, in whose Quarrel he mingled himself, are *the first Rebels* we read of: He had Armour ready for three hundred and eighteen Men, train'd up in his House. Upon his return from this Slaughter, *Melchisedek, the Priest of the most high God, meets him*, and gives him a solemn *Blessing* in His Name, who is *the Possessor of Heaven and Earth*. And tho' it's true, he refus'd to be *made rich* by the Spoils, yet the Right that he had to bring down and plunder so many Tyrants, appears from his paying Tythes to *Melchisedek*; for we cannot think that he would have brought *Robbery for a Burnt-Offering*. *Jacob* recover'd a Part of the Land *with his Sword, and his Bow* out of the Hand of the *Amorites*; nay, he had the Name of *Israel* given him in the Field of Battle, because *by his Strength he laid hold of the Angel*, and Gen. xiii. 1, 2.

and had Power both with God and Man, and prevailed: So that Cowardice, in any of his Posterity, was a departure from that noble Spirit their Fathers had been Eminent for.

And especially, if you'll consider 'em as a People set apart to the Worship of God, they were bound to run all Hazards in defending what he gave 'em. When they were frighted with the *Anakims*, faint-hearted, and durst not go on, it was acting so far below themselves, that he will scarce own 'em to be his People; but says, That it's *a Generation that do err in their Hearts, they knew not his Ways.* Their Spirits had a wrong Turn, and he swore, *That they shall never enter into his rest*; And if they should allow an Enemy to break in upon the Land of their Possession, it was dishonourable to their Name: But *Dan* bears up the old Figure, and in *judging of his People, is like one of the Tribes of Israel.*

(2.) Here are the Ways that he takes to do it. Where you may observe,

1. The Policy and Wisdom of this People: They are compar'd to *Serpents* and *Adders.*

2. Their Courage, or the Hazard they run: They'll throw themselves into the *Path*, venture being crush'd, rather than lose their End.

3. Their Resolution to have the Blessing whatever it cost 'em: If they can't dismount a Tyrant by mere Force, they'll *bite his Horse's Heels, so that the Rider shall fall backward.*

1. They are represented as a wise and well-instructed People; *a Serpent in the Way, an Adder in the Path.* Doubtless *Issachar* thought it a good *Prudential* to humble themselves, and hold their Lives upon no other Tenure than the Will of a Prince; but *this their Way was their Folly. Dan* takes his Maxims as they rise from the plain Welfare of the Community: He'll neither

he bester'd nor wheedled out of his Privileges; he'll lose 'em neither by War nor Treaty: As he's Serpent enough to understand what's best for him; so, like *the Adder, he stops his Ears against the Voice of the Charmer, charming never so wisely.*

The want of such a Spirit, is the Presage of Ruin. *Thou hast hid their Hearts from Understanding, therefore shalt not exalt them.* Christ himself hath bid his People take to 'em the Wisdom of the Serpent; tho' here I would not have you mistake this for the mere *Wrigling* of that Creature. Fraud and Artifice, lurking Ways, and lying Words, are as much below the Wisdom that will save a Nation, as they are against the Honesty that must save a Soul. Those Men that came to *David*, and *had understanding of the Times, and knew what Israel ought to do*, found that the Wisdom of the Serpent was consistent with the Innocence of the Dove. Job xvii. 4.

2. Besides a Capacity to contrive what is best, here's a Courage to execute it. This is a Tribe that *Moses* speaks well of in the Blessing that he gave 'em. *Dan is a Lyon's Whelp, and he shall leap from Basban.* And we may observe a Character of that sort in the Verse before us, That he'll venture himself as *a Serpent in the Way, as an Adder in the Path*; he'll run the Hazard of being trampled under foot, rather than take up with the poor and scanty Terms that an Enemy gives him. 'Tis better being crush'd at once, than condemn'd to a miserable Existence: And these are things that will deliver a People over to the Voice of Fame: The good Esteem and hearty Wishes of the World will be to such as *offer themselves willingly, and jeopard their Lives in the high Places of the Field.* Deut. xxxiii. 22.

3. They are determin'd to have the Blessing at any Expence: Nor will they lose Things for

want of meer Names and Forms; they'll endeavour to bring down a Tyrant by his own Methods, if all the reſt ſhall fail; And when he deſigns to ride over Liberty and Religion, if they cannot ſtop his Career, they'll break his Neck; the very *Horſe's Heels*, which ſhould have ruin'd Them, ſhall receive the Wound that will prove fatal to Him. And indeed when a People are thus inclin'd to *looſe the Bands* of their Captivity, it's no very hard matter to humble the Wicked by the Meaſures they have taken. Violence and Iniquity do not ſo eaſily carry their Load, but, in a little time, their *Rider may fall backward.*

(3.) WHEN *Jacob* hath thus deſcrib'd his Son by the brave Meaſures that he'll take, he recommends the whole Deſign to the Bleſſing of God; *I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.*

Some imagine that the good old Patriarch was, at this time, almoſt ſpent upon his Death-bed with going ſo far as he had done; and in theſe Words he takes breath again: Others think there's in them the Horror of that Idolatry that he ſaw the Tribe of *Dan* would run into. But, if you'll take 'em for a Pauſe, it's a Sign, that what he had ſaid of a People getting back their Liberties, was of ſo much Value with him, that his Soul can reſt a while upon it, before he proceeds to the other Bleſſings.

Or, you may underſtand it, as ſeveral would do, for a perſonal Wiſh, *Q. D.* "Let me turn "aſide for a Moment from telling what will "happen to you, and ſpend one Thought upon "my ſelf. You hear what *Iſſachar* will give "up, and *Dan* retrieve; but theſe things be-"long to a World I am going from. There's "ſomething nearer me than your Proſperity; "*I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.*" If you

you take it thus, it tells us, That for good Men to know that they who come after 'em will be zealous for God, and truly concern'd for the Publick Interest, is One Cordial in a dying Hour; as *David* saith to *Solomon*, *I go the way of all the Earth; but be thou strong, and shew thy-self a Man.* 1 Kings ii.

But I see no reason why *the Salvation* that he *waited for*, may not be connected to the ways that *Dan* would take in *judging his People*. And then it includes in it these three things.

1. His hearty Wishes to so good a Cause, *Q. D.* "This will be thy Temper, and my "Blessing go along with it. It's what I think of "with Pleasure, and in some of my last Breath "commit thee to the Favour of Heaven: *The* "*God before whom my Fathers walkt, the Angel* "*that redeem'd me from all Evil, establish the* "*Work of thine Hand.*"

And this we have had many Examples of; tho' good People were just at the Gates of Glory, yet they could not take leave of those that stay'd behind, without a Testimony for the Cause they had been engag'd in: Which ought to be of the greatest Value with us, that such a Number of excellent Persons have died Praying for *the Peace of our Jerusalem*. They have spoken of the Liberties of Mankind, when themselves were leaving all Things of that sort; and we cannot think that God would let 'em go out of the World, either with a Lye in their Mouths, or a Trifle in their Hearts.

2. When he adds, *I have waited for thy Salvation*; it may be understood as a Direction to those brave People, to tell 'em, they must hope for Success in a religious Way. Second Causes are employ'd; but the good old Man would let 'em know, That *their Salvation is of the*

Lord: And if they will conquer in earnest, they must be a People that *wait for it.*

This comprehends the Duty that they owe to him, their Dependance upon his Care, their Jealousy for his Honour. The Profane, the Unclean, the Evil-doers do not come into the Number. If they have any hopes of being deliver'd, 'tis from something else, *for God is not in all their Thoughts.* They that use his Name without Reverence, and his People without Pity, can't think that he hath any Pleasure in their Ways. But *Jacob* would have them give all their Counsels and Attempts a
Ps. cxlix. 6. serious Tincture, for when *the high Praises of God are in their Mouths*, it will add a Weight to *the two edged Sword that is in their Hands.*

3. This seems to be an Act of his Faith in the Great *Messiah*; for it's under this Name that another good old Man receiv'd him: *Lord, now lettest*
Luk. ii. 29, 30. *thou thy Servant depart in peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.* Nor could this be thought improper to mingle with the Zeal they had for Civil Liberties: It was by a *Faith* in him that *the Elders obtained a good Report*, in *subduing Kingdoms, working Righteousness, stopping the Mouths of Lions,*
Heb. xi. 33, 34. *waxing valiant in Fight, and turning to flight the Enemies of the Aliens.* The Believer hath in him the truest Courage. There's nothing in any one Doctrine of Christianity that will tye up the Hands of an injur'd People. One that hath *tasted that the Lord is gracious*, must have Pity to the Desolations of Mankind. He can't endure to see that Nature ruin'd by a Tyrant, that hath been honour'd by a Saviour.

And then, besides, as the Kingdom of a Messiah extends it self, it will *proclaim Liberty to the Captives.* It's an Institution, as well as a Prophecy, that there shall be *no hurting nor destroying in all his holy Mountain*; and he is then said to *take to him-*
Rev. xi. 18. *self his great Power and Reign, when he destroys them that destroy the Earth.*

And,

And, again, One that hath Faith in Jesus, is waiting for that time, when *Kings shall shut their Mouths at him*; *Princes shall see and arise*, and he'll strike through Monarchs *in the Day of his Wrath*, and wrinch his Glory out of their Hands, who have taken it from him.

Again, waiting for this Salvation, prepares a Man for the Day of Battle. A Christian does not fight upon those Hazards that others do, who lose two lives at once, that which drops in the Field, and that which is eternal. The Believer in these Dangers takes himself to be *fighting the good Fight*, and *keeping the Faith*; and if *his Course* is at an end in this Attempt, it will be *finish'd with Joy*.

And thus have I set before you the two Temers that distinguished these Tribes. Here's *Death*, *Life*, *and Cursing*, *and Blessing*: The Choice must now be your own Act. My Time hath suffer'd me to do little more than take the Words to pieces, and consider the Parts of 'em asunder; you'll easily apply what you have heard these two ways.

1. Into a full Resentment of those Doctrines that would perswade you out of your Liberties upon the same Terms that *Issachar* parted with theirs. 'Tis pity that humane Nature it self should be so far debased; but 'tis with an Aggravation that we see the Holy Name of Christ hath been blasphem'd; that those Mysteries must be the Choice, which was the Romans Abhorrence; as the Apostle saith in another case, it's *a Formication not so much as nam'd among the Gentiles*. Do not take it for a small matter, for at this Gap do they throw in all the Superstitions of Worship, their *damnable Doctrines*, as well as their cruel Measures. 'Tis by this means they'll steal away our Religion, and fill the Nation with Darkness, and Blood.

2. This calls us up to the Praises of God, who deliver'd us from the Stupidity of *Issachar*, and inspir'd

spir'd us with the Temper of *Daniel*, at our Revolution.

I'm sensible, this Mercy hath had all the Regards that the Children of *Israel* gave to the *Manna* which fell from Heaven. At first we gather'd it, we tasted it, liv'd upon it, and reckon'd it *Angels Food*; now 'tis but *light Bread*, and we want *Flesh to eat*; nay, as it is said of *Seeva*, we are *going out after strange Flesh*: And I doubt not but the Parallel would hold further, that it will come as soon out of *Our Nostrils*, as it did out of Theirs. What they desir'd in their *Lust*, they enjoy'd with a *Plague*, for e're *it was chew'd*, while *it was yet between their Teeth*, the *Wrath of God* fell upon 'em.

But I would recommend the great Things that He hath done for us, to your Value and Care; and this can be expressed in no better way, than by *walking in the Light*, while we have *the Light*; a *Conversation that becomes the Gospel*; an Abhorrence of any thing that would mingle with your Religion, or defile your Practice; a Pity to the poor Protestants in *France*, upon whom *the Clouds have have return'd after the Rain*; a having no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness. And, whoever they are that have no Compassion for Blood, no Reverence for Leagues, *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly, mine Honour be not thou united; for in their Anger they slew a Man, and in their Self-will they dig down a Wall*: Let such *Counsel of the Wicked be far from me, I have waited for thy Salvation, O Lord.*

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